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AVALLON

By A. H. KRAPPE

THE problems connected with the concept and the etymology of *Avallon* have repeatedly attracted the attention of students.¹ Few of these, however, have attempted to go beyond the mediaeval documents and the Arthurian tradition. But it is clear, it would seem, that the name, whether we see in it the reflex of Celtic mythological fancies or whether more prosaically we derive it from Welsh *afal*, Corn. Bret. *aval*, O.Ir. *abhall*, must be far older than the middle ages. In view of the importance of the fruit for the populations of the temperate zone of the Old World on the one hand and of the known ubiquity of eschatological notions on the other, it is at least possible that a wider search and a more comprehensive examination of the problem will throw additional light on the subject. For this reason, excursions into classical antiquity and an application of the comparative method may not seem out of place; for it cannot be assumed that the last word has yet been said on this fascinating theme.

I

The first Hellenic² navigator to penetrate into the northern seas was, as is generally known, Pytheas of Massilia, a contemporary of Alexander the Great. His work has perished; but excerpts from it survive. One of the most interesting of these forms part of Pliny's *Natural History*.³

Pytheas (credidit) Guionibus⁴ Germaniae genti accoli aestuarium oceani Metuonidis nomine spatio stadiorum sex milium, ab hoc diei navigatione abesse insulam *Abalum*, illo per ver fluctibus advehi (scl. electrum) et esse concreti maris purgamentum, incolae pro ligno ad ignem uti eo proximisque Teutonis vendere. huic et Timaeus credidit, sed insulam Basiliam vocavit.

In this text the meaning of the word *Metuonidis* is clear: it is related to O.Fris. *mêde*, O.Du. *mada*, M.Du., M.L.G. *made*, M.H.G. *matte*, O.E. *maedve*, M.E. *meadow*.⁵ It indicates meadow or pasture land of the type still common along the Frisian coast. On the meaning of the word *aestuarium* light is thrown by a frag-

¹ John Rhys, *Studies in the Arthurian Legend* (London, 1891), pp. 328 ff.; Lucy A. Paton, *Studies in the Fairy Mythology of Arthurian Romance* (Boston, 1903), pp. 38 ff.; J. D. Bruce, *The Evolution of Arthurian Romance*, I (Göttingen, 1923), 81, 138, 199 f.; E. K. Chambers, *Arthur of Britain* (London, 1927), pp. 219 f.; F. Lot, *Romania*, xxvii (1898), pp. 529-573; L. Cons, *Modern Philology*, xxviii 1930-1931, pp. 385-394; C. H. Slover, *ibid.*, pp. 395-399.

² On his Carthaginian predecessors cf. G. Hergt, *Die Nordlandfahrt des Pytheas*, diss. Halle-Wittenberg, 1893, p. 5. On Pytheas, cf. G.-E. Broche, *Pythéas le Massiliote* (Paris, 1935), where the older literature is given.

³ Lib. xxxvii, cap. 35-36; cf. H. D'Arbois de Jubainville, *Revue Celtique*, xii (1891), pp. 13 f.; *Cours de littérature celtique*, xii (Paris, 1902), pp. 72 f.; D. Detlefsen, *Die Entdeckung des germanischen Nordens im Altertum* (Berlin, 1904) p. 4.

⁴ *Guionibus* is probably an error for *Teutonibus*. Γ was frequently confused with T by the copyists. For an instructive parallel (*Ταυράνης* for **Ταυράνης*) cf. H. Brunnhofer, *Arische Urzeit* (Bern, 1910), p. 39.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 9 ff.; *Nachtrag* (Berlin, 1909), p. 15; *N.E.D.* s.v. *Meadow*.

ment of Suetonius' *Prata*, preserved in Isidore of Seville,¹ which reads: 'aestuaria, per quae mare vicissim tam accedit quam recedit.' Ptolemy translates it with *εἰσχωσις*, denoting a bay or an estuary but also a shallow coast line covered by the sea at high tide. The term thus defines admirably the Frisian North Sea coast and the mouths of the Elbe and Weser, of which Pytheas may therefore be supposed to have had detailed knowledge. He may have been the direct or indirect source of the excellent description of the region found in the work of Pomponius Mela.²

However this may be, it is certain that the island *Abalus* (or *Abalum*, for it may have been of the neuter gender) mentioned in the text must be Helgoland or one of the Frisian islands. It is tempting to connect it with *Habel* and *Appelland*, names still borne by two of the Halligen Islands off the west coast of Schleswig-Holstein.³

The name of Timaeus as Pliny's authority recurs in another passage of the work (iv, 94) where, speaking of the 'Scythian' coast, he says:⁴ 'Insulae complures sine nominibus eo situ traduntur, ex quibus ante Scythiam quae appellatur Bau- nonia unam abesse diei cursu, in quam veris tempore fluctibus electrum eiciatur, Timaeus prodidit, reliqua litora incerta signata fama, septentrionalis oceanus.'

In the same place (iv, 95) Pliny quotes Xenophon of Lampsacus (who wrote about 100 B.C.):⁵ 'Xenophon Lampsacenus a litore Scytharum tridui navigatione insulam esse immensae magnitudinis Balciam tradit; eandem Pytheas Basiliam nominat.'

This is clearly in contradiction with the passage mentioning Abalus, and there must be some confusion of Pliny or his authority.⁶ Detlefsen⁷ conjectured that Pytheas called the island *Abalus* but referred to it as *α βασιλεια νησος*, i.e., an island ruled by a king. However that may be, Timaeus' Basilia turns up again in the account of Diodorus Siculus (v, 23) drawing on Timaeus:⁸ 'Just opposite Scythia, above Galatia (i.e., Gaul), an island lies in the ocean called "Basilia"; upon it amber is cast up by the waves, which is otherwise not found in any place on the earth.'

There is nothing intrinsically improbable in these accounts. Beach-washed amber is even now by no means rare in the North Frisian islands and along the west coast of Jutland. As late as 1800 the amber yield of the North Sea coast of Jutland was quite considerable,⁹ and in prehistoric times the amber reaching the Mediterranean is known not to have been the Prussian type of amber but to have come from the coast of Jutland via the Elbe and across the Brenner Pass

¹ *De nat. rer.* 41; *Orig.* XIII. 18. 1; cf. Detlefsen, *Die Entdeckung*, p. 5; E. Norden, *Die germanische Urgeschichte in Tacitus Germania*, Leipzig-Berlin, 1920, p. 296, n. 2; W. J. Becker, *Geographische Zeitschrift*, XVII (1911), pp. 669 and 671. The same author's article 'Die Bernsteinwege des Altertums,' in *Weltverkehr und Weltwirtschaft*, 1913-14, pp. 177 ff., has not been accessible to me.

² Lib. III, cap. 54; cf. J. Geffcken, *Timaios' Geographie des Westens* (Berlin, 1892), p. 79 (*Philologische Untersuchungen*, XIII); cf. Becker, *Geogr. Zts.*, XVII, 665-675.

³ Hergt, *op. cit.*, p. 34; Detlefsen, *Die Entdeckung*, p. 12; F. Nansen, *In Northern Mists* (New York, 1911), I, 72; Charles Elton, *Origins of English History* (London, 1882), p. 65. Cf. also the isle called *Ebelö*, N.E. of the Little Belt, and the village of *Aulum* on Thy.

⁴ Detlefsen, *Die Entdeckung*, pp. 16 f.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁶ Geffcken, *op. cit.*, p. 68 ff.

⁷ *Die Entdeckung*, p. 18.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁹ R. Hennig, *Neue Jahrbücher f. d. klassische Altertum*, XLIX (1922), p. 365; Sir E. H. Bunbury, *A History of Ancient Geography* (London, 1883), I, 13 and 597; Becker, p. 673.

to the mouth of the Po.¹ The Teutons, like the Cimbri whose name still survives in *Himmerland* (Northern Jutland),² and like the Ambrones whose name is still recalled by that of the isle of *Amrum*,³ are known to have inhabited the great peninsula separating the North Sea from the Baltic. Helgoland is known to have been much larger in former times, having been reduced in size by the action of the waves.⁴ It is also known that the equinoctial storms considerably increase the amount of amber washed ashore, and spring very probably meant therefore the opening of the 'amber season.'⁵ The absurd statement that it was used as fuel is a simple *τόπος* of the type common with the writers of antiquity; it is to be compared with the yarn of Strabo (xvi, 4.19) and Diodorus Siculus (ii, 49) to the effect that the Arabs were in the habit of using cinnamon and cassia as firewood. It was suggested by some text which stated that amber was combustible, a fact brought out by Pytheas and denied, as we know from Pliny (xxxvii, 36), by the geographer Philemon.⁶

At all events, it is certain that Pytheas of Massilia, on visiting the Frisian archipelago, found an island named *Abalus* (or *Abalum*) subsequently referred to as *Basilis*, in or near which amber was washed ashore and formed an article of commerce.

II

Pliny did not depend entirely on Greek sources. In his geography of Germania (iv, 97)⁷ he expresses himself as follows: 'Inde insulae Romanis armis cognitae, earum nobilissimae Burcana Fabaria nostris dicta a frugis similitudine sponte provenientis, item *Glaesaria* a sucino militiae appellata, barbaris Austeravia, praeterque Actania.'

In another place (xxxvii, 42) Pliny reverts to the subject:⁸ 'Certum est gigni (sucinum) in insulis septentrionalis oceani et ab Germanis appellari *glaesum*, itaque et ab nostris ob id unam insularum *Glaesariam* appellatam Germanico Caesare res ibi gerente, Austeraviam a barbaris dictam.'

Elsewhere (iv, 103) he mentions this name as referring to an entire archipelago:⁹ 'ab adversa in Germanicum mare sparsae *Glaesiae*, quas Electridas Graeci recentiores appellavere, quod ibi electrum nasceretur.'

This information appears largely derived from Roman sources. The amber islands are of course identical with those of the Greek accounts, except that a Teutonic nomenclature visibly prevails; for *glaesum*, *Glaesaria*, *Glaesiae* are clearly connected with O.Germ. *glez*, O.E. *glaer* 'amber,' from *glisan*, 'to shine, to glitter.'

Pliny was a superficial compiler who never tried to harmonize his sources and to identify geographical names. Thus it is not particularly surprising that he

¹ Hennig, *op. et loc. cit.*; *Von rätselhaften Ländern* (Munich [1925]), pp. 85 f.; H. Schaal, *Vom Tauschhandel zum Welthandel* (Leipzig, 1931), p. 19; E. Norden, *Alt-Germanien* (Leipzig-Berlin), 1934, p. 258, n. 3. ² Detlefsen, *Die Entdeckung*, p. 36; *Nachtrag*, p. 9; Norden, *Alt-Germanien* p. 208.

³ R. Much, *Zts. f. d. Alt.*, LXII (1925) 135; P. Kretschmer, *Glotta*, xxi (1932), pp. 116 f.

⁴ Hergt, p. 34; Hennig, *Von rätselhaften Ländern*, p. 90; Becker, *loc. cit.*

⁵ Hergt, p. 35.

⁶ Cf. E. Norden in *Festschrift zu C. F. Lehmann-Haupt's 60. Geburtstage* (Wien-Leipzig, 1921), pp. 182 ff. ⁷ Detlefsen, *Die Entdeckung*, pp. 39 f. ⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 40. ⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

should have failed to see the identity of *Abalus* and *Glaesaria*. But the question arises: How is this double name to be explained?

Abalus, evidently derived from **aballos*, the Celtic word for 'apple,' if not outright identical with it, is apparently the Celtic name for the island, which means that the informants of Pytheas were men of Celtic speech. This may mean that at the end of the fourth century before our era the Frisian archipelago was, or had been until recently, inhabited by people of Celtic speech, or was known and frequented, presumably for commercial purposes, by Celts. *Glaesaria* (*Glaesiae*) is the Latin form of the Teutonic designation of the island or islands and betrays a Teutonic informant of the Roman compiler.

Now it is of course perfectly clear why an island on which amber was washed ashore or was sold should be called *Glaesaria* or something like it by a population of Teutonic speech. But how are we to explain the Celtic name *Abalus*? What has the apple to do with amber?

Here another ancient writer furnishes a clue. In his *Argonautica* (IV, 611 f.) Apollonius Rhodius describes how the maidens named Heliades wept amber over the fall of Phaëton, being themselves turned into poplars: but typical Alexandrian that he was, he shows his erudition by adding: 'But the Celts say that amber drops are the tears of Apollo himself when he had been banished by Zeus to the land of the Hyperboreans':

Κελτοὶ δ' ἐπὶ βάξιν ἔθεντο,
ὥς ἄρ' Ἀπόλλωνος τὰδε δάκρυα Λητοῦδαο.
ἐμφέρεται δὴναις, ἃ τε μυρία χεῖρε πάροιθεν,
ῥῆμος Ὑπερβορέων ἱερὸν γένος εἰσαφίκανεν
οὐρανὸν αἰγλήεντα λιπὼν ἐκ πατρὸς ἐνιπῆς,
χωόμενος περὶ παιδί, τὸν ἐν λιπαρῇ Λακερείῃ
δῖα Κορωνίς ἔτικτεν ἐπὶ προχοαῖς Ἀμύροιο.

From other sources we know that the Celts had a divinity currently identified with the Graeco-Roman Apollo. We know a number of his cult titles; but his name is always given in the form of an *interpretatio romana*. If we assume, as we safely may, that the identification was favored by resemblance of name, we should conclude that the god was known as **Aballo* or **Abello*, and this would explain the name given to the amber island of the North Sea by the Celtic informants of Pytheas; for it stands to reason that it was sacred to the god whose tears the precious substance was supposed to be.

Now the question arises: What evidence is there for any connection of the Frisian island known as *Abalus* to the Celts of the fourth century before Christ with the tale of *Avallon* of the mediaeval texts? After all, a span of fifteen hundred years is not lightly bridged. But if it can be shown that this same connection of the island with amber is still found in the mediaeval documents, it will be clear that we are dealing with the same concept.

In the oft-quoted text from the work of William of Malmesbury *De antiquitate Glastoniensis ecclesiae*, composed between 1129 and 1135, we find the following passage:¹

¹ E. Faral, *La légende arthurienne* (Paris, 1929), I, 304.

De diversis nominibus ejusdem insulae. Haec itaque insula primo *Ynswytrin* (i.e. *Ynisgwtrin*), a Britonibus dicta, demum ab Anglis, terram sibi subjugantibus, interpretato priore vocabulo, dicta est sua lingua Glastinbiri . . . eciam *insula Avalloniae* celebriter nominatur, cujus vocabulo haec fuit origo . . . *Avalla* enim Pritanice *poma* interpretatur Latine; vel cognominatur de quodam *Avalloc*, qui ibidem cum suis filiabus, propter loci secretum, fertur inhabitasse.

Here, then, the word *Ynisgwtrin* is represented as the Celtic equivalent of Glastonbury, otherwise called *insula Avalloniae*. Accepting the fanciful etymology of *Glastonbury* (= *urbs vitrea*), the Welsh translation is of course fairly correct; for once Glastonbury was thought, rightly or wrongly, to be derived from O.E. *glaer* 'amber' (which in mediaeval times had assumed the meaning of 'glass' in all Teutonic languages), the name would fit well enough a site called in Welsh *Ynisgwtrin* 'glass island.'¹ In other words, we find, in the early part of the twelfth century, in Angevin England, the same connection of an island called *Avallon* with a word the original meaning of which was 'amber.' Since no amber is, or ever was, found in or near Glastonbury, it would follow that the name had become attached to it merely because it was known as the isle of the Celtic Apollo, whose connection with amber is very ancient indeed.

In the middle ages, to be sure, this connection had been completely forgotten; hence the queer explanation of the name *Ynisgwtrin* 'isle of glass' by Giraldus Cambrensis,² who thought this name derived from the color of the water surrounding the site: *propter amnem scilicet quasi vitrei coloris in marisco circumfluentem*: hence the fanciful story of the swineherd Glass, preserved not only by William of Malmesbury but also by earlier Irish sources and localized, to all appearances, at Glastonbury as early as the end of the ninth century or the beginning of the tenth.³ They all presuppose a Roman or Celtic name of the site composed of *glaesum* (or its Celtic equivalent) meaning, originally, 'amber' and subsequently 'glass.'

III

So far we have been dealing with geographical names attached to places the reality of which on the terrestrial map is not open to question. This is equally true of the Frisian island of *Abalus* and of the *insula Avalloniae* alias *Ynisgwtrin* alias *Glastonbury*. Before embarking on a discussion of the subsequent development of the concept of *Avallon* among the Celts, who used this name to designate a sort of *pays d'outre-tombe* or paradise, it is well to turn once more to the Teutonic world.

There exists a number of Scandinavian documents reporting the following strange tradition. In the Far North lies a country variously called *Glaesisvellir* or *Glaesisvøllum* ruled over by a king who, like all his ancestors and predecessors, is named Goðmundr. This country, though adjacent to the land of giants (Risaland) or even part of it, is yet separated from Jötunheimr proper by an icy river called Hemra and is described as a land of bliss, a sort of terrestrial paradise. In it is

¹ Cf. the name of the town of *Glesborg* in Western Jutland, evidently named after the amber (*gles*) which used to be washed ashore there. Cf. also Lith. *gentāras*, *gintāras*, and the Russian loanword from the same *jantar*, 'amber,' but Cheremiss *jandār*, 'glass.'

² *Speculum ecclesiae*, c. 49 (*Opera*, iv, 49).

³ F. Lot, *Romania*, xxvii, 534.

located the enigmatic Odáinsakr 'the Field of the Immortal'.¹ Goðmund's house and garden are described as a sort of elysium. Owing to the nature of the land, he is himself 500 years old; but in spite of this great age, he is the father of lovely daughters one of whom, Ingibjörg, by her supernatural charms ensnares a mortal hero, Helgi Thorisson. There is however something uncanny in her nature, for when she is forced, by the intervention of the pious king Olaf Tryggvason, to let him go, she deprives him of his eye-sight, so that at least no mortal woman shall enjoy his good looks.²

The chief source of this tradition is the saga of Thorstein bǫjarmagn,³ to which must be added the þáttir of Helgi Thorisson⁴ and the first chapter of the *Hervararsaga*. The tradition was also known to Saxo Grammaticus,⁵ though he does not mention *Glaesisvellir*. Though written down late, these stories are clearly much older than the thirteenth century, and the concept underlying them is certainly pre-Christian.⁶

What is of interest to us here is, of course, the name given to the land of bliss, *Glaesisvellir* or *Glaesisvollum*, obviously derived from O. Germ. *glez* 'amber,' which has given off the Lat. *glæsum* borrowed, as we have seen, in the course of the commercial dealings of the Romans with the Teutonic peoples, and which is the modern *glass*.⁷ Snorri knows, besides, a grove called *Glasir*, located at the gates of Walhöll,⁸ and the grove *Glasislundr* is referred to in one of the Eddic poems.⁹ In the *Iarlmagussaga p.m.* 320–322 we find a *glérhiminn* (coelum vitreum), a paradise to which old heroes ride.¹⁰

We thus face the somewhat startling fact that among the British Celts *Avallon*, which is identified with a site bearing a name derived from *glæsum* (or thought to be thus derived), at an unknown date developed into a supernatural region of bliss, a sort of paradise, while an analogous process took place among the Teutons, who likewise connected their notion of a land beyond the grave with the concept of amber (*glez*).

In view of the late date of these texts, sceptics might be tempted to suspect Celtic influences, the magic of the Arthurian lore, to have been responsible for them. A closer view quickly dispells such a suspicion. For the two concepts have little in common beyond the most general features naturally associated with a land of bliss. Most important of all, there is, in these Teutonic texts, not the

¹ Cf. Paul Herrmann, *Die Heldensagen des Saxo Grammaticus*, II (Leipzig, 1922), p. 102; Sir Israel Gollancz, *The Sources of Hamlet* (London, 1926), p. 26.

² This is an extremely wide-spread motive represented, in classical antiquity, by the story of Daphnis beloved of a nymph; cf. *Bulletin Hispanique*, xxxv (1933), pp. 115 ff.

³ *F.M.S.*, III, 174 ff.; *Zts. f. d. Myth.*, I (1853), 416 ff.

⁴ *Ibid.*, III, 135.

⁵ Ed. Holder, pp. 287 ff.

⁶ Cf. R. Heinzel, *Sitzungsber. d. Wiener Akad. d. Wiss., phil.-hist. Cl.*, cix (1885), pp. 697 ff.; W. Golther, *Handbuch d. germanischen Mythologie* (Leipzig, 1895), pp. 280 f. (where the older literature is listed); J. A. MacCulloch, *Eddic Mythology* (Boston, 1930), pp. 321 f.; N. Kershaw, *Stories and Ballads of the Far Past* (Cambridge, 1921), pp. 16, 87, 100 f., 221; R. Much, *Abhandlungen zur germanischen Philologie*, Festgabe f. Richard Heinzel (Halle 1898), pp. 271 f.

⁷ Heinzel, *op. cit.*, p. 704; *N.E.D.*, s.v. *Glass*.

⁸ *Skáldskaparmál*, c. 34.

⁹ *Helg. Hjqr.* 1.

¹⁰ J. Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*, II⁴, 685, n. 1.

slightest allusion to an island named *Avallon* or anything like it.¹ Thus the conclusion would seem warranted that we are dealing with independent developments derived, of course, from a common root, which now calls for a closer examination.

IV

We are first led to ask what a grove such as *Glasisr* has to do with amber, for to derive the name from the verb meaning 'to shine,' as most Edda commentators have done, would be literally an etymology of the *lucus a non lucendo* type. Here Hellenic mythology furnishes a welcome clue. The reader will recall the myth of Phaëthon, delightfully versified by Ovid,² which ends by the Heliades, Phaëthon's sisters, weeping amber over his fall, after having been themselves transformed into white poplars (λευκαί). The basis of this myth is the perfect realization that amber is essentially a resinous product.³ What is wrong is merely the idea, implied in the story, that only poplars exude amber and which seems to be due to a misunderstanding, some compiler having mistaken the Phoenician *lebana*, Gr. λευκός, denoting the stryax tree, for λεύκη 'white poplar.'⁴

At all events, the ancients were quite aware of the fact that amber is a form of resin.⁵ What was not generally known was the fossile nature of the product, though Philemon was familiar also with this circumstance.⁶ As a rule it was assumed that amber was produced by living trees on islands of the Northern Ocean. Thus, according to Pliny,⁷ Mithridates was said to have reported that on the coast of Germany there was an island named Serita, grown with cedars exuding resin in the form of stones. In other words, the islands on the shores of which

¹ This does not preclude the existence of Irish influences in the descriptions and, here and there, in the nomenclature. It is virtually certain, for example, that the expression *jord lifanda manna* 'land of the living,' which designates the land of bliss in the *Eirik Vídforlassaga*, is a translation from the Irish.

² Metam. II, 363 ff.; cf. also Eur. *Hippol.* 732 ff.; Ap. Rhod. IV, 602 ff.; Pusa. I, 4. 1; Diod. Sic. V, 23. 2 ff.; Lucian, *Περὶ τοῦ ἡλέκτρου*, I ff. A. B. Cook, *Zeus*, II, 476; Frazer, Apollodorus, *The Library* (London, 1921), II, 388 ff.; G. Knaack, *Quaestiones Phaethontae* (Berlin, 1886; *Philologische Untersuchungen*, VIII).

³ Cf. K. Müllenhoff, *Deutsche Altertumskunde*, I (Berlin, 1890), 217. OE *sāp* means both 'resin' and 'amber'; cf. also Magyar *gyántar* 'amber' and *gyénta* 'resin.'

⁴ O. Gruppe, *Die griechischen Kulte und Mythen in ihren Beziehungen zu den orientalischen Religionen*, Leipzig, 1887, p. 169. I do not know the source of Voltaire's account of the transformation:

Cet ambre fut formé, dit-on,
Des larmes que jadis versèrent
Les sœurs du brillant Phaëthon,
Lorsqu'en pins elles se changèrent,
Pour servir, sans doute, au bûcher
Du plus infortuné cocher
Que jamais les dieux renversèrent.

For a different and better explanation of the 'poplars,' cf. now *Class. Philol.* XXXVII (1942), 369.

⁵ Cf. Aristotle, *Meteor.* IV, 10, p. 388 b 18; Pliny, *N.H.* XXXVII, 42; Tacitus, *Germ.*, c. 45; Martial, IV, 59. 1 f.; Felix Dahn, *Bausteine*, I (Berlin, 1879), p. 3.

⁶ Pliny, *N.H.*, XXXVII, 33: 'Philemon fossile esse (electrum dixit).'

⁷ *N.H.*, XXXVII, 31: 'in Germaniae litoribus insulam esse quam vocari Seritam, cedri genere silvosa; inde defluere (sucinum) in petras.' On the text of this passage, see *Class. Philol.*, loc. cit., p. 365. n. 45.

amber was fished from the sea became, in the imagination of the Mediterraneans, islands grown with amber trees!

This does not mean that the Mediterraneans were the first or the only ones thus to account for the valued product. It is worth noting that the Germans, too, were quite aware of the true nature of amber, as is sufficiently proved by the M.L.G. *glar* 'resin.'¹ Knowing, therefore, that amber was not a marine product, they answered the question of its origin by the assumption that it was a resin produced by trees growing in some island or continent beyond the sea, whence it was washed to the German shores. Since to the poor northern Barbarians amber was about as valuable as gold is to us, this assumption quite naturally led to the belief in an island paradise or Eldorado.

That this inference is essentially correct and that it was drawn by both Germans and Celts is clearly shown by the Celtic tradition of an *insula vitrea*, appearing as an *isle de voirre* in Chrétien's *Erec*:

1945 Avuec ceus que m'oez nomer
Vint Maheloas, uns hauz ber,
Li sire de l'Isle de Voirre;
En cele isle n'ot l'en tonoirre,
Ne n'i chiet foudre ne tanpeste,
Ne boz ne serpanz n'i areste
N'il n'i fet trop chaut, ne n'iverne.

It is also borne out by the expression 'por tot l'or d'Avalon' occurring in the *chanson de geste* known as *Le Couronnement de Louis*, quite independently of the Arthurian tradition, which has nothing to say on the conception of the fairy-land as a sort of Eldorado.²

From what has been said above it is clear that the 'glass island' was originally an 'amber island,' the word *glæsum* meaning, originally, not 'glass' but 'amber,' a development found in the Celtic as well as in the Teutonic languages; witness Ir. *glain*, *gloin* 'glass,' 'crystal,' Welsh *glein*, *glain* 'gemma, tessera,' which presuppose an older **gles-inu-s*.³

V

There was living, in the frozen North of ancient Europe, still another branch of the Indo-European family, the Slavs. Whether or not they reached the shores of the Baltic in the pre-Christian era, they are certain to have become acquainted with amber, directly or indirectly by way of exchange. Let us see what rôle the precious substance played among them.

In the Russian traditions frequent mention is made of a precious stone called Алатыр (*Alatyr*), a word derived from Gr. *ἤλεκτρον*, as are O.E. *electre*, *elehtre*, *elothe*, Welsh *elydr*, *elydyr*, *elydn*, *elyd*, etc. This stone Алатыр (*Alatyr*) occurs in spells (заговоры), where it is described as lying in an island in the ocean called Буйя (Буйан). On that stone sits a fair maiden who sews together gaping wounds with a silken thread. Elsewhere this mystic island is depicted as elysian in char-

¹ R. Much, *Zeitschrift f. deutsches Altertum*, LVI (1924), p. 101.

² F. M. Warren, *Modern Language Notes*, XIV (1899), col. 93 ff.

³ J. Rhys and D. Brynmor Jones, *The Welsh People* (London, 1906), p. 62.

acter. The stone itself is of a white burning color. The isle of БУЯН (*Buyan*) is the home of the sun, which goes there every evening after setting on this earth, to rise from it again with the return of the morning.

БУЯН (*Buyan*) was originally an adjective referring to остров (*ostrov*) 'island,' as may still be seen from the compound word БУЕВОЙ остров (*buyevoi ostrov*). The word itself has the meaning of 'burning,' 'ardent.'

From under the stone flow rivers of healing. Under the influence of Christian ideas the stone was later transferred to the Holy Land. In this new locality it reappears in the Russian religious poem of the *Golubinaya Kniga*. But the essential nature of the stone has not changed: it is always warm and blazing with light. Or else it is characterized by the epithet ГОРЮЧ (*goryuch*) 'inflammable.' In a Russian popular song a husband, on parting, gives his wife the consoling assurance that he will return 'when the fiery white stone grows cold,' meaning, of course, at the Greek Calends.¹

The great Russian folklorist Afanasiev was at a loss to explain the attribution of such magical properties to amber; but the facts pointed out above make this development perfectly clear. Amber was known to come from a mysterious island paradise (Glaesisvellir, Avallon), the land of immortality, hence the attribution of marvelous properties to the precious substance.

VI

While there is a *prima facie* presumption of some connection between the Scandinavian *Glaesisvellir* and the Eddic grove *Glasi*r with the *Glaesariae* or amber islands off the coast of Jutland, still, to clinch the matter, additional evidence will be highly desirable

In the *Hervararsaga* Goðmundr is given a son named Hofundr, who is represented as an outstanding judge.² One fails to see what a judge has to do with what is clearly an otherworld realm, unless he have the function of such otherworld judges as Minos, Rhadamanthys, Osiris, etc., in other words, unless he be a judge of the dead, a conclusion drawn, about fifteen years ago, by the late R. Much.³ Now it is probably not a mere accident that a similar divine judge, likewise represented as the best of judges, should have been known to the Frisians. His name is *Fosite*, identified, rightly or wrongly,⁴ with *Forseti*, the name of a god of peace and justice mentioned in the Edda.⁵ The Frisian deity was closely connected with the island of Helgoland, which after him was named *Fositesland*.⁶ Fosite, like Hofundr, like Minos, Rhadamanthys and similar figures, was to all appearances a judge of the dead,⁷ Helgoland being regarded, by the coastal populations, as an isle of the dead. We know from an oft-quoted passage of Procopius of Caesarea⁸ that the notion of an island of the dead, to which the souls of men were

¹ Afanasiev, *Poetičeskija vozzrenija Slavjan na prirodu* (Moscow, 1865-69), II, 131; cf. also W. R. S. Ralston, *The Songs of the Russian People* (London, 1872), pp. 374 ff. A. Wesselofsky, *Archiv f. slavische Philologie*, VI (1882), pp. 33-72.

² Cf. Uhland, *Schriften*, VIII, 110, n. 336; Kershaw, *op. cit.*, p. 87. ³ *Loc. cit.*, pp. 99 f., 104.

⁴ The subject is fully discussed by Much, *ibid.*, p. 100.

⁵ *Grimn.*, 15; *Gylfag.*, 32.

⁶ Detlefsen, *Die Entdeckung*, p. 13.

⁷ Much, p. 104.

⁸ *Bell. Goth.*, IV, 20; cf. Hennig, *Historische Zeitschrift*, CXXXIX (1928), 25 ff.

ferried, was well known along the shores of the Northern Ocean. At all events, Helgoland, as its very name (Heiligland) implies, was a holy island, considered inviolable, down into the middle ages, even by pirates.¹ Very probably this peace, imposed by the god, had led at an early age to the establishment of a fair,² and Pytheas, as quoted by Pliny, admits as much when he speaks of the islanders of Abalus selling their amber to the neighboring Teutons. This fact would also account for the special knowledge possessed by the Massilian navigator. If the god was the owner and ruler of the island, it is not likely that the epithet βασιλεια should refer to an ordinary chieftain, the less so because the regal title was not always very popular with the Gauls and the Teutons dwelling between Rhine and Elbe. It is more likely that the title simply refers to the god as owner of the island. This divine ownership is also borne out by other evidence.

We have seen above that Apollonius Rhodius knew a Celtic myth explaining amber as the tears of the Celtic Apollo, banished by Zeus to the land of the Hyperboreans. He does not state that this exile was what was technically called a *relegatio ad insulam*. That such it was is shown (1) by the tradition embodied in the book of Hecataeus of Abdera on the Hyperboreans and preserved by Diodorus Siculus, to the effect that in the Far North a people lived on an island and worshipped Apollo in a round temple, and (2) by a passage in Plutarch, who speaks of Kronos banished by Zeus to an island in the Britannic Ocean, where he is plunged into a deep slumber.³ The story of the god's exile makes it virtually certain that the god designated as 'Apollo' and 'Kronos' respectively is one and the same divinity. Nor are we at a loss to account for the two identifications. The Greek Apollo, too, was known to have been condemned by Zeus to become a bondman of Admetos, who is but a form of the Hellenic god of the lower world.⁴ As for Kronos, he was known to have been dethroned by his son and sent into exile to some island in the Western Sea known to be sacred.

Can this mysterious island be identified with Helgoland or some other island of the Frisian archipelago? The question has been answered affirmatively in a study of the late James Rendel Harris.⁵ The chief difficulty militating against this view is the fact that Hecataeus makes this island as large as Sicily and that in the Isle of Kronos the sun disappears only for a short time during thirty days, a statement which would indicate a much higher latitude than Helgoland. But we have seen above that Xenophon of Lampsacus, as quoted by Pliny, speaks of the island of *Balcia*, i.e., *Basilia* as of immense size. Now it is quite true that most data referring to distances in the North are greatly exaggerated, owing in part to the slow progress made by Mediterranean vessels in the Northern seas.⁶ None the less, it is more likely that in speaking of an immense island in these regions the ancient authors merely transferred data referring to Britain or Scandinavia to the mysterious island of the Hyperborean Apollo.⁷

¹ Adam of Bremen, iv, 3.

² Much, p. 103.

³ Plutarch, *De facie in orbe lunae*, c. 26.

⁴ Apollod., iii, 10. 4; cf. K. O. Müller, *Prolegomena zu einer wissenschaftlichen Mythologie* (Göttingen, 1825), pp. 300 ff.; Pauly-Wissowa, *R.-E.* i, col. 380.

⁵ *Bull. John Rylands Library*, ix (1925), pp. 372 ff.

⁶ Detlefsen, *Die Entdeckung*, p. 6; Hennig, *Von rätselhaften Ländern*, p. 109.

⁷ Harris, *loc. cit.*, pp. 381, 390 f.

VII

The name of the Celtic Apollo is not known. It is however sufficiently clear, if the facts reviewed are correct, that he was a chthonian or semi-chthonian divinity. What led to his identification with the Greek Apollo was, apart from the latter's *θηρεια*, very probably a certain similarity of his Celtic name with the Greek word. A name such as **Aballo* or **Abello*, if striking an Hellenic or Roman ear, would immediately bring to mind the name of the god of Delphi and Delos. This Celtic name would account also for the name of the holy island, *Abalus*.¹

Granting the correctness of these deductions, one would naturally suppose this Celtic divinity to have survived among the British Celts. Such is indeed the case. In the above-quoted text of William of Malmesbury we have seen that, among other etymologies of the name of the *insula Avalloniae*, we find the derivation from a certain *Avalloc*, who is said to have resided at Glastonbury with his daughters. This view appears to have been shared by Geoffrey of Monmouth (xi, 2), to judge from his words: 'sed et inclytus Arturus rex letaliter vulneratus est, qui illinc ad sananda vulnera sua in insulam Avallonis advectus,' where *Avallonis* is apparently the genitive of *Avallo*, who is clearly a personage.² This interpretation was adopted by the Welsh *Bruts*, who render Geoffrey's *insula Avallonis* by *ynys Avallach*.³ The versified text of Geoffrey's *Historia*, dating from the thirteenth century and probably the work of Guillaume de Rennes,⁴ renders the phrase *in insulam Avallonis* of Geoffrey by *ad aulam regis Avallonis*. Lastly, Giraldus Cambrensis⁵ refers to the same personage as *ab Avallone quodam*, which proves indeed, as Cons puts it,⁶ that for Giraldus and his Norman French readers *Avallo* was a *quidam*; but it does not prove that for the Welsh he was not a very definite and sufficiently well known personage. Who is he?

Ferdinand Lot was the first, I believe, to compare the glowing description of the isle of Avallon as given by Guillaume de Rennes with the no less glowing account of the Land of the Living offered in the Irish *Adventure of Condlá the Fair*.⁷ This land of eternal bliss, corresponding to a well-known and oft-discussed Irish fancy, is ruled over by a king named Tethra, the Irish Hades, surnamed *Boadach* 'the Victorious,' an epithet not unbecoming the dark divinity of death.⁸ His wife, who appears in the form of a carrion crow, is an Irish Bellona.⁹ *Avallo* or *Avallach* thus plays in the Brythonic documents the same rôle as the Irish Tethra in the Gaelic texts, and the conclusion would seem warranted that, like Tethra, he is a god of the dead, a chthonian. With this conclusion the Welsh genealogies, dating from the tenth century,¹⁰ agree when they make him the mythical ancestor of the Welsh kings; for it will be recalled that according to Caesar¹¹ all Gauls believe

¹ It is tempting to connect the name with that of *Abellio*, *Abelio*, a god worshiped in Aquitania; cf. E. Espérandieu, *Recueil général des bas-reliefs de la Gaule romaine*, II (1908), p. 24, No. 881; Pauly-Wissowa, *R.-E.*, s.v. *Abellio*; but more data are needed. ² Faral, *op. cit.*, II, 299 f.

³ H. Zimmer, *Zeitschrift f. franz. Sprache u. Literatur*, XII (1890), pp. 247 f.

⁴ F. Lot, *Romania*, XXVII, 553 f.

⁵ *Spec. eccl.*, II, 9.

⁶ *Modern Philology*, XXVIII, 387.

⁷ F. Lot, *Romania*, XXVII, 557 ff.; Zimmer, *Zeitschrift f. deutsches Altertum*, XXXIII (1889), p. 279.

⁸ Cf. the Greek 'Αδμητος, 'Αδάμαστος 'the Unconquerable,' common cult-titles of Hades.

⁹ Lot, *Romania*, XXVII, 562, n. 1.

¹⁰ J. Loth, *Les Mabinogion* (Paris, 1913), II, 329 and 336.

¹¹ *Bell. Gall.*, VI, 18.

themselves descended from the Brythonic Hades, identified with the Roman Dispater.

If Avallo or Avallach is a chthonian, i.e., king and ruler over the dead, his kingdom, the amber isle, is necessarily the abode of the departed, i.e., a *Toteninsel*. Again this is borne out by the mediaeval traditions. It is to Glastonbury, the *urbs vitrea*, that Melvas abducts Queen Ginaver in the *Vita St. Gildae*. Gaston Paris, in the last century, saw the identity of this *Melvas* with *Maheloas*, *sire de l'Isle de Voirre*, who occurs in Chrétien's *Erec* in the passage quoted above, and with *Maleaguant*, the abductor of Ginaver in Chrétien's *Lancelot*, and he proved that this mysterious personage is none other than the king of the dead.¹ In a comprehensive article published some ten years ago I have shown that these and related stories are but the Celtic forms of a theme common to most peoples of I.-E. speech.² Thus there is no need to revert to the subject. What is more important is F. Lot's demonstration that the name *Melvas* (*Malvasius* in Geoffrey, ix, 12) is the Welsh *mael-vas*, of which the second element is the O. Welsh *bás* meaning 'death' and that Melvas is none other than the 'Prince of Death,' a most fitting name for the great god of the lower world.³

Ferdinand Lot also compared the *insula vitrea* with the 'glass tower' of certain Irish tests,⁴ which rises in Mid-Ocean and is inhabited by mute people, again a most common and most apposite characterization of the dead.⁵ Again, in the *Adventure of Condlia the Fair* the land of the *side* is reached in a 'glass boat,'⁶ which plays a conspicuous part in Celtic legends referring to the land beyond the grave. It is also said that 'to embark in a glass house' is (or was) a Welsh paraphrase for 'to die.'⁷ Finally, the 'glass mountain,' so common in European fairy tales,⁸ is clearly an offspring of the same conception: it always denotes the otherworld, the land beyond the grave. Since most of the *märchen* types in which this motive is found are far older than the introduction of glass into Central and Northern Europe, it stands to reason that the word *glass* here underwent the same semantic development and that for 'glass' we must really read 'amber.'

Bearing in mind that our 'glass island' was originally an 'amber island,' we find that the Celtic evidence bears out our inductions and that the parallelism between the Celtic and Teutonic developments is most striking.

Nor is this all. Avalloc, the Celtic god of Death, reappears under the name of *Euelake* (*Evalach*) in the Grail story. There, however, so far from being a divinity, he is depicted as a bed-ridden old man, 300 years of age, his body covered with wounds and scars.⁹ The sorry plight in which he finds himself may be due to the imagination of Christian story-tellers, as Rhys suggested.¹⁰ None the less, his

¹ G. Paris, *Romania*, x (1881), 490 ff.; xii (1883), 502, 508 ff.; F. Lot, *ibid.*, xxvii, 564 ff.

² *Revue Celtique*, XLVIII (1931), 94-123

³ F. Lot, *Romania*, xxiv (1895), 328.

⁴ *Le Moyen Age*, iv (1894), 28 f.; Rhys, *Studies*, pp. 333 f.; D'Arbois, *Cours*, II (1884), 118 ff.

⁵ *Classical Philology*, xxxvi (1941), 137.

⁶ F. Lot, *Romania*, xxvii, 561, n. 4.

⁷ F. Liebrecht, *Des Gervasius von Tilbury Otia Imperialia*, Hannover, 1856, p. 151.

⁸ S. Thompson, *Motif-Index* F 145.1, 751; H 331.1.1; 1114; H. Siuts, *Jenseitsmotive im deutschen Volksmärchen*, (Leipzig, 1911), pp. 11, 43, 344 f.

⁹ Malory, xiii, 10; xiv, 3.

¹⁰ *Studies*, p. 337.

longevity recalls the Scandinavian tradition of Goðmundr, ruler of Glaesisvellir, said to have been 500 years old.

Glastonbury had been identified, at an unknown date, with the land beyond the grave. It must appear doubtful whether the mediaeval writers had any knowledge of the true origins of the name. But as Jessie Weston suggested long ago, the place must already in pre-Christian times have enjoyed a local reputation for sanctity: it probably was the site of an early Celtic temple or burying place.¹

On the other hand, it is difficult to separate this strange identification from a number of still stranger ones, peculiar to the same region. Thus the whole county of Somerset, called *Aestiva Regio* in the Latin *Vita St. Gildae*, is ruled over by Melvas, whom we already know as the king of Hades. Furthermore, we know that the Welsh equivalent of the name, *Gwlad yr Háv*, was a common euphemism for the mysterious land from whose bourne no traveller returns.²

In his *Lancelot*, Chrétien makes Ginaver's supernatural abductor a king of Goire, i.e., of the peninsula now called Gower, and he describes him as living with his father in his capital of Bade, which is none other than the ancient city of Bath. One is thus led to conclude that the entire region must have been, in pagan times, somehow connected with the mysterious Celtic god whom we have called, following Hecataeus of Abdera and Apollonius Rhodius, the Celtic Apollo. Nor are we mistaken in this conjecture.

Bath, as is well known, was a watering place as early as the time of the Roman occupation of Britain, when it was known under the name of *Aquae Sulis*.³ A face with flaming hair, sculptured in stone, which has come to light on the site appears to be the face of Apollo, and *Aquae Sulis* may at one time have been thought the equivalent of *Aquae Solis*. This conjecture is borne out by the well-known fact that in the Celtic countries of the continent hot springs, the medicinal value of whose waters was appreciated long before the Roman conquest,⁴ were attributed to the action of Apollo,⁵ worshipped under various cult names such as Apollo Bormo (Bourbonne-les-Bains), Apollo Grannus (*Aquae Granni*, Aix-la-Chapelle), etc.⁶ There can therefore be little doubt that at Bath, too, we are dealing with Celtic mythology and that the entire region was dedicated to the cult of the subterranean Apollo who made the beneficent waters surge forth from the depth of the earth.

William of Malmesbury, in the above-quoted text, expressly states that the mysterious Avalloc, after whom the *insula vitrea* was named *insula Avalloniae*, had dwelt there with his daughters. Ferdinand Lot aptly compared these daughters with the women of the *síd*, who in the Irish texts, for example in the *Adventure of Condlá the Fair*, came to ensnare mortals and to abduct them into the far-off realm which is the kingdom of Death.⁷ What is noteworthy is that on the Teutonic side we find exactly the same development: King Goðmundr, who rules

¹ Jessie L. Weston, *The Quest of the Holy Grail* (London, 1913), p. 58.

² Rhys, *Studies*, p. 345.

³ Faral, II, 103 f.

⁴ Norden, *Alt-Germanien*, p. 45, n. 3.

⁵ A. Maury, 'De l'Apollon gaulois,' *Revue archéologique*, II^e série, I (1860), 58-61, 391-394.

⁶ Cf. *Archiv.f.d. Studium d. neueren Sprachen*, CLXIII (1933), 170 f.

⁷ *Romania*, XXIV, 330.

over Glaesisvellir, is the father of several daughters of supernatural beauty who prove the undoing of mortal men.¹ One of them, Ingibjörg, as we have seen above, seduces the hero Helgi Thorisson and subsequently, from motives of jealousy, deprives him of his eye-sight. As Ferdinand Lot also saw,² we are dealing with variants of the theme which forms the subject of Goethe's ballad *Der Erlkönig*: the lovely elves, in spite of their unearthly beauty, are *Totendämonen*, demons of death, leading to perdition the unfortunate mortals who fall into their power.³

VIII

In the Norse traditions Goðmundr's daughters ensnare mortal heroes by their superhuman beauty. Furthermore, Goðmundr, intent on winning power over his visitors, extols to them the delights of his garden and tries to lure them thither to gather some of the luscious fruits.⁴ The Irish *sid* proceed in much the same manner, as we see, for example, from the story of Condla the Fair.⁵ They also bring into play the allurement of an enticing fruit, an apple from the Land of the Living endowed with all the marvelous properties imaginable. Once the mortal has tasted thereof he is no longer satisfied with what this earth and his homeland can offer him: he is drawn by an unconquerable longing to fairy-land, and he ends up by following the fair charmer, never to be seen again. We also hear of an apple from the Land of the Living which, like many other wish objects, is never consumed.⁶

Nor are such fancies peculiar to the Celts. The Greek myth of the apples of the Hesperides is equally to the point. They, too, grow on an island far in the West, the tree being guarded by a dragon. The story of Heracles penetrating into the garden, slaying the dragon and obtaining the apples, is a parallel to the myth of his victory over Cerberus: both represent him as a conqueror of Death.⁷

In Norse mythology, the apples of Iðunn are frankly apples of immortality by which the gods manage to keep their youth.⁸ Icelandic traditions even know of apples of Hel eaten, presumably, by all those who enter her dark domain never to return to earth.⁹ In Teutonic fairy tales the apple orchard frequently occurs as the equivalent of the other world, the world of the dead.¹⁰

In these circumstances we are not surprised to find, in the versified version of Geoffrey's *Historia* referred to above, a description of Avallon with analogous features:¹¹

¹ Saxo Grammaticus, *ed. cit.*, p. 288.

² *Romania*, xxvii, 562, n. 1.

³ H. Güntert, *Kalypso*, Halle, 1919, *passim*.

⁴ Saxo, p. 289; cf. K. Weinhold, *Sitzungsber. d. Wiener Akad. d. Wiss., phil.-hist. Cl.*, LXVIII (1871), pp. 796 ff., 804.

⁵ F. Lot, *Romania*, xxvii, 559 ff.; cf. also Güntert, *op. cit.*, pp. 80 f.

⁶ F. Lot, *Romania*, xxvii, 560; Zimmer, *loc. cit.*, p. 263; cf. also p. 156 on the *Imram curaig Maelduin*, and p. 258 on the *Echtra Brain maic Febail*.

⁷ A. Wünsche, *Ex Oriente Lux*, I (Leipzig, 1905), 59 f.

⁸ *Gylfag.*, 26, *Skáldskaparmál*, c. 22; cf. P. Herrmann, *Nordische Mythologie* (Leipzig, 1903), pp. 438 ff.

⁹ *Island. Sög.*, II, 351; cf. Herrmann, *op. cit.*, p. 435.

¹⁰ Siuts, *op. cit.*, pp. 94 f.

¹¹ F. Lot, *Romania*, xxvii, 558.

Cingitur Oceano memorabilis insula nullis
Desolata malis. Non fur, non predo nec hostis
Insidiatur ibi; non nix, non bruma nec estas
Immoderata furit; pax et concordia perpes.
Ver tepet eternum; nec flos nec lilia desunt,
Nec rosa, nec viole. *Flores et poma sub una*
Fronde gerit pomus. Habitant sine labe pudoris
Semper ibi juvenis cum virgine. Nulla senectus
Nullaque vis morbi, nullus dolor; omnia plena
Leticie . . .

In the *Livre d'Artus*, finally, mention is made of a magic garden in which blooms an apple-tree; whoever eats of its fruit forgets the past and remains in that garden forevermore.¹

The rôle of the apple as a fruit of immortality, of youth, growing in a far-off land described as a paradise, is thus well established among Celts, Teutons, and Greeks. Once the Celtic Apollo was thought to preside over such a land it was natural enough that there should also grow an apple-tree of the type just described. What has always struck students is the strange similarity of the name of the god with the Celtic (and Teutonic) name of the fruit: Welsh *afal*, Bret. Corn. *aval*, O.Ir. *abhall*, from which O. Celt. **ab-allo-s* may be inferred. Unless one be willing to have recourse to the rather desperate theory of a conflation of names, some connection must be presumed between the name of the Celtic Apollo and the fruit, the more so because the island of *Abalus* survives, apparently, in the form of the German names *Habel* and *Appelland* given to two islands off the west coast of Schleswig-Holstein. In other words, the connection of the god with the fruit does not appear to be peculiar to the peoples of Celtic speech.

Here another very important question comes up: How old exactly is the association of the Northern Apollo with a land of bliss? For it stands to reason that, should this association be of relatively recent date, the apple-tree may have come in late as a result of a pun or a folk-etymology.² As for the documents reviewed so far, whether Celtic or Scandinavian, those mentioning a land of bliss are strictly mediaeval, and their frankly pagan tone does not necessarily imply a very old tradition, for it must be remembered that in the North the pagan religion and pagan survivals reach far down into the middle ages.

In these circumstances it is fortunate that classical literature once more comes to our aid. Pindar gives a glowing description of a Nordic land of bliss, an inaccessible island ruled over by Apollo:³ 'Neither by ship nor by land canst thou find the wondrous road to the trysting place of the Hyperboreans . . . In the banquets and praises of that people Apollo chiefly rejoices . . . neither sickness nor baneful eld mingles among that chosen people; but, aloof from toil and conflict, they dwell afar from the wrath of Nemesis . . .'

In another passage, the context of which is lost, Pindar, like Simonides, had

¹ W. Hertz, *Spielmannsbuch*, Stuttgart, 1900, p. 360.

² Such was the view of J. D. Bruce, *op. cit.*, I, 199.

³ *Pyth.*, x, 27 ff.; cf. U. v. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Pindaros* (Berlin, 1922), pp. 127 f.

stated that the Hyperboreans live to an age of 1000 years,¹ which reminds us forcibly of Goðmundr of Glaesisvellir, said to have reached an age of 500 years, and of Euelake (Evalach), the *alter ego* of Avallach, represented as a tercentenarian.

Strabo has preserved the fragment of a lost play of Sophocles dealing, presumably, with the rape of Orithya by Boreas:²

Let us therefore pass over . . . what Sophocles, speaking of Orithya in one of his tragedies, says, that she, being snatched by the north-wind, was carried

‘Over the whole ocean, to the extremities of the earth,
Even to the place where night receiveth its birth,
Where the opposite side of the heavens is beheld,
And where is situated the ancient garden of Phoebeus.’

This text is most instructive in that it shows Apollo as the owner of a garden or orchard, which brings us back to the island garden of Guillaume de Rennes.

To this isle of bliss Apollo carries his favorite heroes, much as Arthur is carried to Avallon by his fairy sister. Thus Bacchylides (III, 53) relates how Apollo releases the good king Croesus from the burning pyre, wafting him to the Hyperboreans in reward for his piety.³ In Pindar’s ode referred to above, the inference is that King Hiero of Syracuse, to whom it is dedicated, will ultimately enjoy the same blissful fate.⁴

These texts are based on the Delphic tradition of the Hyperboreans, worshippers of Apollo. It would lead us too far afield were we to enter upon a discussion of the vexed problem connected with that half-mythical people.⁵ Nor is such a discussion required for the purposes of this study. Suffice it to say that the Greeks of the fifth century before our era (or some of them) believed in the existence of an island in the North, inaccessible to mortals, i.e., an isle of the dead, which they described in colors as glowing as those of the mediaeval accounts of Avallon. It is equally certain that this land of bliss was closely associated with Apollo, i.e. with the Nordic Apollo, who was tacitly presumed, rightly or wrongly, to be the same divinity as the Hellenic Apollo, for reasons some of which have been discussed above.

We may now go a step further. The Celtic texts definitely associate Avallon and *a fortiori* Avallach with apples.⁶ This may have been the result of a folk-etymology. But if it can be shown that the Hellenic Apollo was likewise a god of apples and the apple-tree the conclusion would seem warranted that the same

¹ Strabo, xv, 1. 57.

² Strabo, vii, 3. 1; Nauck, *Fragm. Trag. Gr.*, p. 333:

ὕπὲρ τε πόντον πάντ’ ἐπ’ ἔσχατα χθονός
νυκτός τε πηγὰς οὐρανοῦ τ’ ἀναπτυχάς,
Φοίβου παλαιὸν κήπον . . .

³ Cf. O. Crusius, *Philologus*, LVII (1898), 155 f.; Körte, *Archiv f. Religionswissenschaft*, x (1907), 152. ⁴ H. Jurenka, *Philologus*, LIX (1900), 313 ff.

⁵ Cf. Blümner, in Pauli-Wissowa, *R.-E.* v, col. 295 ff.; Daebritz, *ibid.*, xvii, col. 258 ff.; K. O. Müller, *Die Dorier* (Breslau, 1844), I, 269 ff.

⁶ Cons, *op. cit.*; Slover, *op. cit.*, who deny, of course, the reality of a personage called Avallo or Avallach.

holds true for the Nordic Apollo and that this feature was one of those responsible in the first place for the identification of the two gods.

In this inquiry we are powerfully aided by a study of the late James Rendel Harris, from which some of the following data are taken.¹

There are, first, two cult titles of Apollo pointing to the apple (μηλον): Apollo Μαλέατης (from μαλέα 'apple-tree'), a formation parallel with Dionysos Συκεάτης (from συκέα 'fig'),² and Apollo Μαλοείς, occurring in an inscription from Lesbos³ as well as in a scholion to a Thucydides passage, which tells an amusing story about the origin of the name.⁴ In Lucian's *Anarchasis* (c. 9) Solon explains that the prizes in athletic contests are: at Olympia a wreath of wild olive, at the Isthmus one of pine, at Nemea of parsley, at *Pytho* some of the god's sacred apples. This statement is corroborated by a Delphian coin showing the apples on the victor's table.⁵ In the sacred grove of Apollo near Klazomenai, known as the Grynaean grove, there was an apple-tree which on one occasion was the object of a dispute between the seers Mopsus and Calchas, as to who could divine correctly the number of apples on that tree.⁶

Joining these facts to the consistent association of the Celtic Apollo with apples and apple orchards and adding thereto the Greek statements which tacitly identify the Nordic and Hellenic Apollo, we are led to conclude that the association of the Nordic Apollo with the apple is as old as is that of the Greek god with the fruit, in other words, that the apple is as inseparable from the Celtic Apollo as is his amber and his insular paradise, his sanctuary which he owns and governs.

This being the case, there is no longer any necessity for assuming a conflation of names: that of the Celtic Apollo is identical with the Gaulish *aballo*, O. Celt. **aballo-s*: the god stands to the tree in much the same relation as, for example, the Gr. Πόρκος (later Φόρκυς) to the oak (Lat. *quercus*).⁷

IX

Let us now see what light philology may throw on the history of the apple. The word, as is well known, is common to the Celtic, Teutonic and Slavonic languages;⁸ only the Fin. *omena* and the Hung. Turk. *alma* form a group apart.⁹ The I.-E. languages of Southern Europe have different names for the fruit, though Lat. *malum* is probably borrowed from the Greek (Ion. Att. μηλον, Dor. μάλον).¹⁰ On the analogy of a considerable number of other fruit names derived from the Latin, it has frequently been assumed that the Celtic and Teutonic forms may go back to some Latin word such as *malum abellanum*, from the town of *Abella*,

¹ Rendel Harris, *The Ascent of Olympus*, Manchester, 1917, pp. 36 ff.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 37 f. ³ *I.G.I.* II, 484, cf. Harris, *op. cit.*, pp. 37 and 42.

⁴ Cf. *Revue de Philologie*, I (1877), 185; Steph. Byz., s.v. Μαλλόεις (sic), drawing on the *Lesbika* of Hellanicus. ⁵ Harris, p. 39.

⁶ Myth. Vat., I, 194; Serv. in Verg. *Ecl.* vi, 72; cf. Harris, p. 40.

⁷ *Revue archeologique*, V^e série, XXXVI (1932), 87 ff.

⁸ V. Hehn, *Kulturpflanzen und Haustiere* (Berlin, 1911), p. 626; O. Schrader *Real-Lexikon*, I², 53; J. Hoops, *Waldbäume und Kulturpflanzen im germanischen Altertum* (Strassburg, 1905), p. 477.

⁹ Schrader, *Real-Lexikon*, I², 54.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 53; Hehn, *op. cit.*, pp. 627 f.

now Avella Vecchia, in Campania,¹ which was famous for its fine apples, as may be seen from Vergil's verse (*Aen.* vii, 740):

Et quos maliferae despectant moenia Abellae.

What militates against this derivation is the regularity with which the Celtic, Teutonic and Lithuanian forms obey the sound laws, a rare phenomenon in loan-words. The borrowing would have to antedate the first Teutonic sound-shift.² and antedate by far the period in which we may reasonably suppose the apples of Abella to have acquired their well-deserved reputation. On the other hand, the name of *Abella* is not even the oldest name of the town, which is said to have originally been called *Moera*.³ Accordingly Schrader, who at first had shared the traditional view, later arrived at the conclusion that Abella is named after the fruit and not the fruit after the town,⁴ a conclusion also reached by Johannes Hoops⁵ and R. Much.⁶ It is worth adding that Abella is only one of many apple towns found all over Europe, from the French *Avallon*, the Engl. *Appledore*, the Dutch *Apeldoorn*, the German *Apolda* to the Slav *Jablonka* in the Carpathian Mountains, and even in Palestine: *Tappûah* from Hebr. *tappûâh*, Arab. *tuffâh* 'apple.'⁷ The evidence then points to the fruit having been carried down into the southern peninsula by prehistoric northern tribes, and this again would account for the consistent association, in the Mediterranean countries, of the fruit with the Celtic Apollo and his northern island paradise.

X

If the foregoing deductions are warranted, two additional connections should be demonstrable: (1) Granting that the Nordic Apollo was the god of the amber isle and admitting his identification, by the Greeks, with the Hellenic Apollo, we should expect amber to play some rôle, however modest, in the cult of the latter; (2) Granting that the Celtic Apollo presided over an isle of the dead, the land beyond the grave, and admitting his close connection with the apple-tree, we should expect that tree to have certain very definite chthonian connotations. If these two expectations are realized it will be admitted, we trust, that a very strong case has been made out for the existence of a prehistoric Nordic Apollo cult of which the mediaeval traditions are but a distant echo.

¹ Schrader, i², 53; Hehn, p. 627. The hypothesis is as old as Cormac's *Glossary*; cf. Hoops, *op. cit.*, p. 478.

² O. Schrader, *Prehistoric Antiquities of the Indo-Germanic Family* (London, 1890), p. 276.

³ Serv. ad. Verg. *Aen.* vii, 740; cf. J. Beloch, *Campanien* (Breslau, 1890), p. 411.

⁴ Schrader, *Real-Lexikon*, i², 53. ⁵ *Op. cit.*, pp. 477 ff.

⁶ *Zeitschrift f. österreichische Gymnasien*, XLVII (1896), p. 608. H. Hubert, *The Rise of the Celts* (London, 1934), p. 57, aptly suggests that the name of the town tends to show that the Italic languages once had the word and then lost it. The prehistoric age of the cultivation of the apple was pointed out by S. Fellner, *Die homerische Flora* (Wien, 1897), p. 78. Again J. de Vries, *Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte* (Berlin-Leipzig), 1933, II, 333, from the fact that the Germ. word for 'apple' was not crowded out by the Latin name for the cultivated fruit, concludes that the Germans were familiar with the cultivated apple-tree before their contact with the Romans.

⁷ For a partial list of 'apple towns' cf. Rendel Harris, *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, XLV (1925), pp. 236 ff. On the part of Irish *abhall* in place names cf. P. W. Joyce, *The Origin and History of Irish Names of Places* (London, 1898), I, 516, II, 4 ff.

Since the time of K. O. Müller¹ no one has seriously doubted the historical reality of the traditions concerning the Hyperboreans and their curious connection with the Delphian and Delian Apollo. Thus we are told that 'first fruits' were sent to Delos by the worshipers of the Nordic Apollo as votive offerings (*ἱρὰ*). They were wrapped up in sheaves or straw, and their sanctity was so great as to preclude theft or robbery along the road of their travel through savage and barbarous tribes. The question is of what nature these votive offerings are likely to have been. F. G. Welcker was the first to surmise that these gifts must have been something precious. Inasmuch as the North could boast only of one product answering that description, namely amber, he concluded that it was indeed amber which was thus sent to Delos, the island sanctuary of the god.²

This simple and plausible explanation was lost sight of subsequently, when W. Mannhardt³ conceived the strange idea that the gifts in question merely consisted of some symbol of the type still common in Central European harvest rites. If such had been the case it would be difficult to understand the emphasis laid upon the sanctity of the object: what incentive would there have been for any one to rob or steal it?

What seems to have thrown students off the right trail is the expression 'first fruits' (*sacrorum primitiae*) used by the ancient authors. But if we remember the passage from Pytheas of Massilia quoted above, to the effect that amber in large quantities was washed ashore at Abalus in spring time, all becomes clear enough. It stands to reason that no amber fishing took place during the long northern winter. The 'amber season' therefore opened shortly after the spring equinox, and the first spoils obtained were logically enough considered as *primitiae* and offered to the god.⁴

As for the chthonian connotations of the apple-tree, a number of mediaeval texts appear to bear out this feature. In the English ballad, Tam Lane was sleeping under an apple-tree when he fell into the hands of the queen of elves.⁵ In a German legend, one of the entrances to the lower world opens at the foot of an apple-tree.⁶ It is quite possible that the ympetre in *Sir Orfeo*, which means simply a cultivated tree, from Fr. *ente* < Gr. *ἐμψυτον*, was an apple-tree,⁷ which is known to have been the oldest cultivated tree of Central and Northern Europe.⁸

¹ *Die Dorier*, I, 269 ff.

² F. G. Welcker, *Griechische Götterlehre* (Göttingen, 1857-1862), II, 353 ff. As late as the sixth century of our era Cassiodorus (*Var.* v, 2) reports that a certain northern tribe had sent amber as an offering to the great Theodoric. Cf. also Hennig, *Historische Zeitschrift*, cxxxix (1928), 25 ff.

³ *Wald- und Feldkulte* (Berlin, 1904-1905), II, 234.

⁴ The conception of 'first fruits' and the taboos attached thereto are by no means limited to agricultural products; cf. J. Strahan in Hastings *E.R.E.* VI, 41 ff.

⁵ F. J. Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, II, 350; cf. G. L. Kittredge, *American Journal of Philology*, VII (1886), p. 190; E. Windisch, *Abhandlungen d. kgl. sächsischen Gesellschaft d. Wiss., phil.-hist. Kl.*, XXIX (1910), Abh. 6, p. 189; E. Hull, *Folklore of the British Isles*, London [1928], pp. 239 ff.; L. C. Wimberly, *Folklore in the English and Scottish Ballads*, Chicago, 1928, pp. 311 ff.

⁶ A. Kuhn und F. L. W. Schwartz, *Norddeutsche Sagen, Märchen und Gebräuche* (Leipzig, 1848), p. 262.

⁷ Hertz, *op. cit.*, p. 359.

⁸ Hehn, p. 627; Hoops, pp. 336 f.; *Real-Lexikon, d. germ. Altertumskunde*, I, 112 f.

XI

To conclude this long essay, we may summarize the results reached somewhat as follows: There existed, among the prehistoric populations of the North Sea coast, the belief in an inaccessible island grown with trees which exuded the precious amber and therefore named 'amber isle,' from the valuable product, or else *Abalus*, after the god supposed to be its owner and ruler and who himself was named **Aballo*. Inasmuch as the island was considered the sojourn of the dead, the god himself had chthonian characteristics. His sacred tree was the apple-tree, of which specimens bearing apples of immortality and eternal youth were fabled to grow on the island. In antiquity this *Aballo* was identified, rightly or wrongly, with the Hellenic Apollo, who was accordingly fabled to own an island paradise in the North, to which he wafted his favorite worshipers in reward for their piety.

In the middle ages, when the word for 'amber' had acquired the meaning of 'glass,' the 'amber isle' naturally became a 'glass island' and the O. Celt. **Aballo* became the chthonian divinity *Avallo* or *Avallach* of the Welsh, though his island remained the magic fairy-land known as *Avallon*, to which heroes such as King Arthur were transferred in much the same manner as King Croesus and King Hiero of Syracuse of old, at least in the verses of Bacchylides and Pindar. The county of Somerset having been, in pagan times, particularly devoted to the cult of the Celtic Apollo (because of the hot springs near Bath), it came to be known, as a result of Euhemerism, as the *Aestiva Regio*, the land of the ancient god of the lower world, and the site called Glastonbury by the Anglo-Saxons came to be identified, perhaps by a folk-etymology, with the 'glass island' of **Aballo* called *Avallon*. Among the Teutonic peoples, too, the tradition of the fairy paradise on the amber island was preserved, being carried, presumably, from the Frisian coast to Norway, and it reappears, in the middle ages, in a number of Norse documents.

The nature of the evidence precludes that certainty of result which researches into less remote epochs frequently vouchsafe. In many instances a cautious 'perhaps' should have been added to the one or the other of the deductions and inferences presented. We have omitted this and similar dubitative expressions from fear of tiring the reader who, like the author, may be presumed to be aware of Sophocles' verse

ἴσμεν γὰρ οὐδὲν τρανές ἀλλ' ἀλώμεθα.

PRINCETON, N. J.